



FRESC: Good Jobs, Strong Communities is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ensure that Colorado jobs pay livable wages with family-supporting benefits, and that families have access to affordable housing and a good quality of life. Interfaith Worker Justice - Colorado is a project of FRESC.



The mission of Interfaith Worker Justice Colorado is to educate, organize, and mobilize the religious community in Colorado around campaigns that sustain worker's lives with dignity by improving their wages, benefits, and working conditions.

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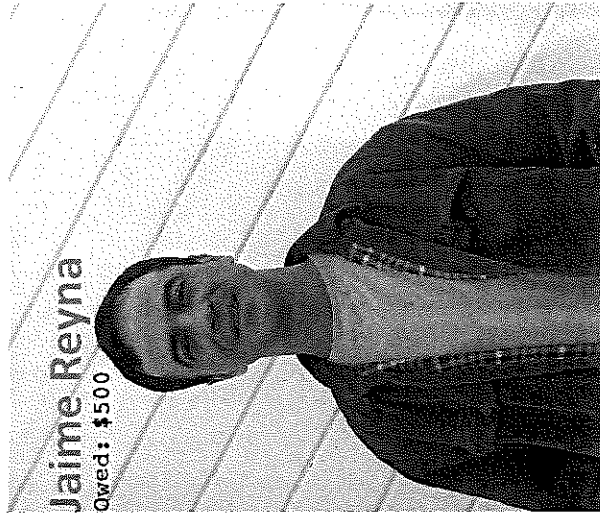
Special thanks to El Centro Humanitario and CO Legal Services for help collecting these accounts.



Around Thanksgiving in 2012, Timothy worked for a Boulder sub-contractor framing a mud room and performing other jobs. Timothy worked about 80 hours for the employer but only received pay for half of his time; the employer still owes Timothy \$800.

When Timothy confronted his employer about his wages, the employer threatened him with bodily harm. Timothy then called the CO Department of Labor who was not able to pursue his case. Timothy tried contacting CO Legal Services but they could not take his case. Timothy was advised to file a lien against the employer's business. However, it costs around \$600 to file and Timothy, already homeless, did not have the money. Timothy has traveled to three counties all in pursuit of his stolen wages. However, he lacks the money and transportation to pursue any further action.

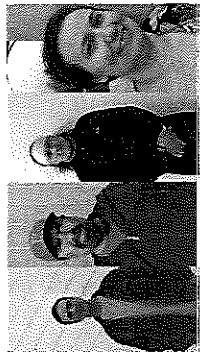
Timothy has been living on the streets and since the wage theft has become sick and can't heal. Timothy says the wage theft "devastated me."



Jaime was working for a small contractor in December 2012 breaking concrete and cleaning out residential houses that were going to be flipped. Jaime's employer told him he would be paid \$500 for the concrete and \$150 for the cleaning and repair work. However, Jaime only received \$150 for his labor.

Jaime sent a notarized letter to the employer and called 10-15 times but was given the run-around by the employer who told him to deal with a new project manager instead. The project manager had a temper and escalated the situation by shouting at Jaime. The project manager threatened to call the police on Jaime when Jaime continued to request his money. Jaime feels his only option to recuperate his money is to go to court but he lacks the time and financial resources to do so.

Jaime experienced anger and frustration. The wage theft was right before Christmas and Jaime was not able to pay for essentials, let alone the gifts he had planned for his two young children. "He broke my heart with \$500."



Wage Theft in Colorado Victims' Voices



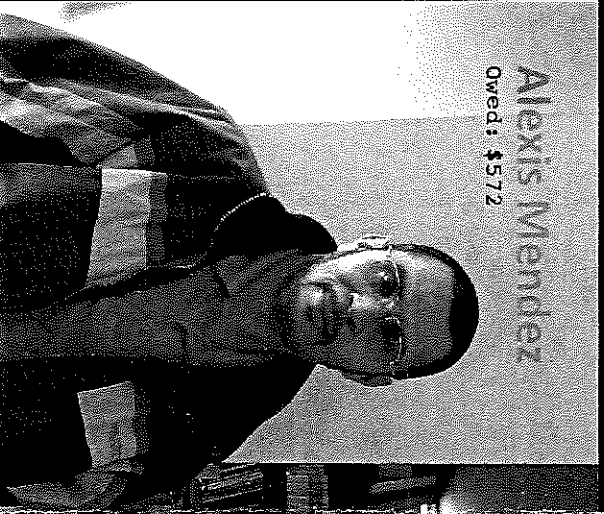


Berta Romeros
Owed: \$870

Berta was working as a painter in Denver in June 2012. She worked for over one month but wasn't paid at all - \$1,700 in earned wages. Six other employees on that site had also not been paid.

The loss of income affected Berta greatly. She had to borrow money from her roommate for rent and public transportation. Berta supports two children and an ill sister so the strain was significant.

Berta tried to contact the employer about her wages but he changed his contact information. Berta was not able to find help from the CO Department of Labor. With the help of the DU Legal clinic the employer agreed to meet but disputed the amount they owed. After failing to show up at two meetings, the employer agreed to a settlement at a third meeting. Even though Berta was owed \$1,700, she settled for \$1,100. Berta knew this wasn't fair but she was desperate for the money to support her family. She didn't have the time or resources to go through the court.

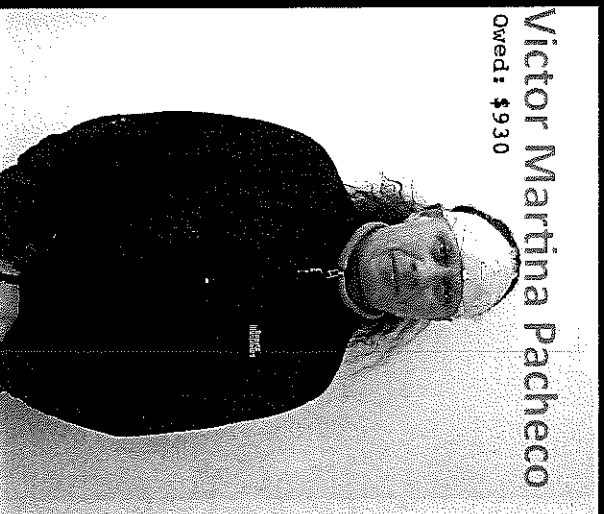


Alexis Mendez
Owed: \$572

In the fall of 2012, Alexis got a job at a franchise of a national car repair chain in Aurora. After a month's work, Alexis went to deposit his first paycheck and learned that the check was bad and he couldn't deposit it. The replacement check Alexis was given was also bad. Alexis quit after a month and a half of work and was only able to cash one check from the employer.

Alexis is still owed \$571.85 and he is now unemployed. Alexis had been very hopeful about that job and believed he could have had a future with that employer. Alexis approached the employer for payment several times and sent a certified letter, to no avail. He called the corporate headquarters but they claimed they were not responsible for the franchise's actions. Alexis has found some hope through the US Department of Labor who are now investigating the employer.

After this act of wage theft, Alexis lost his housing and became homeless.

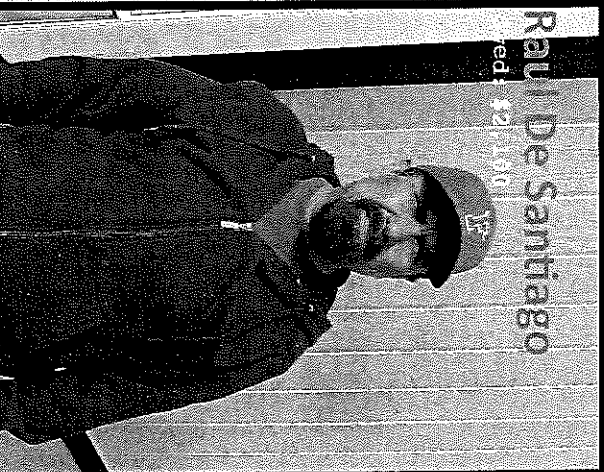


Victor Martina Pacheco
Owed: \$930

In late 2011 Victor worked as a truck driver for a Douglas County-based company. The company failed to pay Victor \$930 of his wages. For two months, the employer put Victor off, saying that the money was coming once he himself was paid by the customer.

As a result of the wage theft, Victor suffered homelessness (he was unable to pay his rent) and much stress and anguish.

During the two month period Victor waited for his employer, Victor lost the right to bring this case to court because he did not make a written demand for wages as current state law requires. Now he is considering asking for help from the DU Legal clinic but he is unsure when he will be able to do this because of his work schedule.



Raul De Santiago
Owed: \$2,100

Raul was working as an interior painter in Aurora in late 2012 when his employer stole \$2,100 of his wages. After about a month of work with no pay, Raul was fired when he asked his employer about his wages. After Raul was fired, he continued to inquire about his missing wages. The employer always said that he would pay Raul but that he didn't have cash on hand.

Raul's life was deeply affected by this act of wage theft. He had to borrow money to cover rent on his trailer. He had no money for gas which prevented him from finding more work. He had to scale back on food. Furthermore, Raul was struck with a feeling of desperation and indignation. He knew that he had earned that money and he was owed it, but he had no way to fix it and didn't know how to tackle the problem.

Raul does not have the time or transportation to navigate small claims court and so his case is still outstanding.